



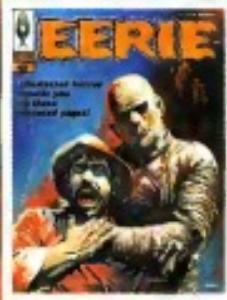
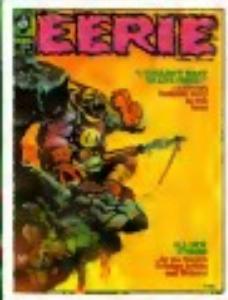
EERIE

A WARREN MAGAZINE

FDC

50¢

BEST STORIES EVER!



**1971
ANNUAL**
FEATURING FANTASTIC
SELECTIONS OF THE
GREATEST
TERROR TALES
FROM OUR EARLY
MACABRE ISSUES!



THIS IS THE WORLD OF EERIE!!

A WORLD OF WEREWOLVES, VAMPIRES, AND CREATURES THAT HAUNT
THE DARKNESS... A WORLD OF SUSPENSE AND FRIGHT... A WORLD
BROUGHT TO LIFE BY GREAT ARTISTS AND WRITERS... THIS IS
MY WORLD... MAKE IT **YOURS** WITH THIS NERVE-NUMBING

2nd ANNUAL COLLECTION OF OUR BEST!!





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ERIE

1971 ANNUAL

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PROLOGUE
SOMEWHERE
IN THE CITY
A DOORBELL
SOUNDS...

NEVER FAILS! WHENEVER
I START WASHING
MY HAIR...

WHO IS IT?

TELEGRAM!
B
Eug



COULDN'T
YOU HAVE JUST
SUED IT UNDER
THE DOOR?

HAS TO
BE SIGNED
FOR...

CHESS

OH, FOR
HEAVEN'S SAKE!
NOW WHERE DO
I HAVE TO...



TIME TO HACK YOUR WAY
TO ANOTHER *SLICE* OF HORROR,
MERRY MANIACS... STEP
CLOSE TO THE GRINDSTONE AS
I SHARPEN THE SHIVERS AND
INTRODUCE YOU TO THE...

Gene
Colan

HATCHET MAN

SASSSS

WHUNK

WAUNK

IDE

HARRY DIP IT
STOP HIM BEFORE
HE KILLS MORE

THAT MANIAC'S
STILL ON THE LOOSE!
CHOPPED A WOMAN
TO BITS LAST
NIGHT...ONLY A FEW
BLOCKS FROM HERE!

THIS IS THE
ONLY SHIRT I
CAN WEAR TO
WORK? I THOUGHT
YOU WERE GOING
TO IRON SOME!

DON'T BOTHER
ME, HARVEY...
POLICE THINK HE'S
SOME KINDA SPLIT
PERSONALITY NUT,
ALWAYS LEAVING
NOTES IN BLOOD
SAID "HARRY
DID IT"...

DIDN'T
SEW ANY
BUTTONS
ON HERE
LIKE YOU
SAID YOU
WOULD...

THAT WOMAN'S
HUSBAND
WORKED AT
NIGHT...LIKE
YOU, HARVEY!
SAME THING
COULD HAVE
HAPPENED
TO ME!

FORGOT
TO MAKE
SANDWICHES
AGAIN.
PHYLLIS...
DON'T KNOW
WHY I BOTHER
CARRY A
LUNCH PAIL!

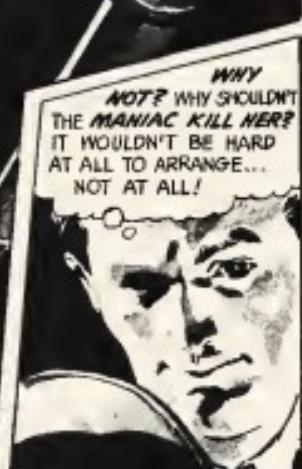
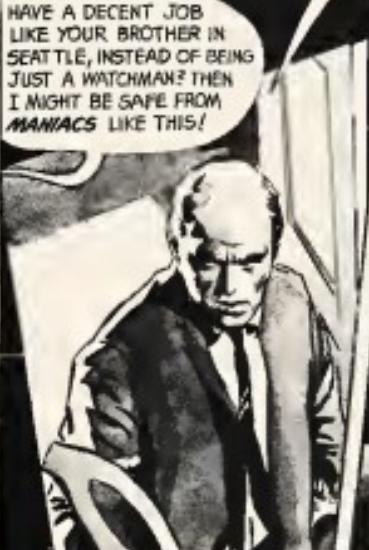


WHY COULDN'T YOU
HAVE A DECENT JOB
LIKE YOUR BROTHER IN
SEATTLE, INSTEAD OF BEING
JUST A WATCHMAN? THEN
I MIGHT BE SAFE FROM
MANIACS LIKE THIS!

G'NIGHT,
PHYLLIS!

TEN YEARS
OF THIS! TEN YEARS!
WISH SOMEONE WOULD
TAKE A HATCHET TO THAT
WOMAN!

WHY
NOT? WHY SHOULDN'T
THE MANIAC KILL HER?
IT WOULDN'T BE HARD
AT ALL TO ARRANGE...
NOT AT ALL!



NOBODY CHECKS ON ME HERE... ONCE I PUNCH IN, I COULD LEAVE WITHOUT BEING NOTICED... PEOPLE'D THINK I WAS MAKING MY ROUNDS!

"NEWSPAPERS GIVE YOU ALL THE DETAILS ABOUT HOW HE WORKS..."

JUST

THE GLOVES, SIR?
LIKE THEM GIFT WRAPPED?

"POLICELL NEVER SUSPECT IT
WASN'T HIM!"

FINE
HATCHET,
SIR...
YOU'LL
GET A LOT
GOOD USE
OUT OF IT!

I'LL BE RID OF PHYLLIS AND THE HATCHET KILLER'LL BE BLAMED! **PERFECT!**

HARVEY?
THAT YOU?
WHY AREN'T
YOU AT
WORK?

YES...
DEAR...
IT'S ONLY
ME...

UGH!
ONE
REALLY
DOES IT...
BUT I BET-
TER GIVE HER THE
A FEW MORE
JUST TO MAKE IT
LOOK GOOD!
NOW
WRITING
ON THE
WALL...
THEN OUT OF
HERE BEFORE
THE NEIGHBORS
BREAK IN!

PART
OF MY
DUTIES ARE TO
CHECK ON THE FU-
RACE ANYWAY... HA!
LOOKS LIKE THE
HATCHET MANIAC'S
GONNA GET CREDIT
FOR ONE HE NEVER
DREAMED ABOUT! THEY
CAN NEVER PIN IT ON ME!

SO
MUCH FOR
THIS! AS FOR
THE GLOVES...



AH! THEY'VE FOUND HER! NOW TO PLAY THE
BEREAVED HUSBAND...



LAST
NIGHT
SOMEONE GOT
IN HERE...CARVED
YOUR WIFE UP
WITH A HATCHET!

OH,
LORD! IT
MUST HAVE BEEN
THAT MANIAC! THAT HATCHET
KILLER FROM THE NEWSPAPER...

MY GOD! WHAT'S GOING
ON HERE?

YOU
HARVEY
WHITTAKER?



THAT'S
HOW WE FIGURE IT, MR.
WHITTAKER...THE MANIAC DID IT...
SAME ONE THAT'S CHOPPED UP
ALL THE OTHERS...

YOU! YOU'RE
THE HATCHET KILLER,
WHITTAKER!

YOU'RE
CRAZY...I'M NOT...



WE FOUND THESE HIDDEN IN A SUITCASE IN YOUR CLOSET... BLOOD-STAINS CHECK OUT WITH SEVERAL OF THE VICTIMS...

I-IMPOSSIBLE! I GOT RID OF THEM--I...NO!

SOMETHING YOU WANT TO TELL US, MR. WHITTAKER?

I-I KILLED... PHYLLIS!
B-BUT THE OTHERS...
SOMEONE ELSE DID THAT...
THE MANIAC... HATCHET KILLER... SOMEONE ELSE DID THAT...

ALL THOSE WOMEN... SOMEONE ELSE DID IT... HARRY! THAT'S THE ONE! HARRY! THE KILLER... MANIAC... HE DID IT!



SHOULD BE STOPPED... BEFORE HE KILLS MORE! MORE WOMEN... HACKED... CHOPPER LIKES TO KILL... KILL THEM ALL! ... NOT AFRAID...

NOT LIKE HARVEY WHITTAKER! AFRAID OF PHYLLIS... I'LL KILL 'EM ALL! SHOW THAT PIPSQUEAK HOW IT SHOULD BE DONE! ME! HARRY! I'LL KILL 'EM ALL!

HARVEY TRIED TO WRITE ON THE WALL... GIVE ME AWAY... BUT I SHOWED HIM... SHOWED HIM HOW... KILL 'EM ALL! KILL 'EM ALL!

AWRIGHT... TAKE HIM AWAY!



POOR HARVEY! ONE HALF HIS BRAIN DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THE OTHER WAS DOING... HIS PERSONALITY WAS MORE SPLIT UP THAN HIS VICTIMS! NOW, YOU'D BETTER HARRY ON TO THE NEXT SCREAM STORY!



**NO ONE DESERVES DEATH MORE
THAN A FOOL... AND FOR ALL HIS
EDUCATION AND FANCY DEGREES,
BRUCE DARNER IS A FOOL!**



BLUNDERING AROUND THESE WOODS WHEN HE KNOWS A WEREWOLF IS ON THE LOOSE? BUT LIKE ALL FOOLS, HE HAS TO LEARN...



*... AND I'M THE ONE
TO TEACH HIM!!*



LOOKS LIKE WE'RE OFF TO A HOWLING START, FIENDISH FANS, BUT YOU'D BEST PROCEED WITH CAUTION INTO THIS BIT OF LYCANTHROPIA, OR YOU MAY WIND UP AS...

LYCANTRIC LORE, OR YOU MAY WIND UP AS... **WOLF BAIT!**



ALL TOO SOON, IT'S OVER,
MOST KILLS ARE A MATTER
OF INSTINCT AND NEED,
BUT BRUCE DARNER
WAS A PLEASURE,
AND I CRY MY
SATISFACTION
TO THE
NIGHT
SKY...

THE FULL MOON STILL RIDES HIGH AND MY
BLOODLUST HASN'T WANED... AND THERE IS
STILL ONE OTHER LIKELY VICTIM!

AAOOOM

THE
ALREADY BROKEN
DOOR GIVES ME NO
TROUBLE, BUT I CANNOT HOLD
BACK AN ANIMAL SNARL THAT RIPS FROM
MY THROAT...

AS I
SUSPECTED,
SHE'S WAITING
AT HIS PLACE...
STUPIDLY
WAITING FOR
A MAN WHO'LL
NEVER RETURN!
TEARS STILL
GLISTENING
ON HER
CHEEKS AS
WHEN I
LAST SAW
HER...



YOU!
NOT
YOU...

THE
SHREDDED RAG
THAT WAS ONCE
A SHIRT, BEFORE
MY BEASTIAL
PLUNGE THROUGH
BRUSH AND
THICKET, MAKES
MY IDENTITY
CLEAR TO HER
BUT IT NO LONGER
MATTERS. HER
SHRIEKING
INCENSES ME, AND
MOVING FOR THE
KILL, I THINK BACK
TO A TIME WHEN
MY PRESENCE
BROUGHT A FAR
DIFFERENT
REACTION...



THAD, PLEASE... THIS ISN'T RIGHT! BRUCE IS COMIN'S BACK TODAY, IT ISN'T FAIR TO HIM!

YOU DON'T NEED HIM, WILMA... A CHEMISTRY PROFESSOR! YOU NEED A REAL MAN... LIKE ME!

BRUCE AND I ARE **ENGAGED** THAD! I SHOULD NEVER HAVE GOTTEN INVOLVED WITH YOU... I SHOULD HAVE... I... I JUST DON'T KNOW!

ALL RIGHT! SEE YOUR COLLEGE BOY... MAKE UP YOUR OWN MIND! THAT BOOKWORM'LL SEND YOU RUNNING STRAIGHT BACK TO ME!

THINGS WERE STARTING TO FALL APART. THE FULL MOON KILLINGS HAD THE TOWN UP IN ARMS, WILMA WAS STARTING TO HAVE CONSCIENCE PROBLEMS. THEN THAT PUNK HAD TO SHOW UP...

WILMA...

OH, BRUCE, IF ONLY IT COULD'VE BEEN SOMETHING HAPPIER TO BRING YOU BACK!

I'VE ORGANIZED A CITIZENS GUARD TO CONSTANTLY COMB THE AREA... THEY DON'T NEED SOME COLLEGE SMARTALECK GETTING IN THEIR WAY!

YOU SHOULD'VE STAYED AT THE UNIVERSITY, PROFESSOR... WITH A KILLER RAMPAGING AROUND HERE, YOU MIGHT NOT BE SAFE!

MY FATHER WAS ONE OF THE VICTIMS, SHERIFF. I INTEND TO FIND OUT WHO OR WHAT DID IT... IT SEEMS YOU'RE NOT HAVING MUCH LUCK!

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT ME OR MY IDEAS, SHERIFF... I'M GOING TO **BE** IN THE WAY UNTIL SOMETHING'S DONE ABOUT THIS!

...BUT I
COULDN'T
BE
BOthered
ABOUT
DARNER'S
MEDDLING...
**THERE
WERE
MORE
IMPORTANT
MATTERS
AT HAND!**

SATISFY YOU, DARNER? YOU WANTED TO FIND OUT FIRST HAND WHAT WAS GOING ON... NOT LIKE LIFE AT THE UNIVERSITY, EH?

L-LORD! I NEVER DREAMED IT WOULD BE THIS BAD...

WHAT KIND OF ANIMAL WOULD MUTILATE A PERSON LIKE THAT, THAD? THIS ISN'T BEAR COUNTRY...

THIS IS NO TIME TO MAKE JOKES, SHERIFF! SOMETHING **MUST** BE DONE! WHATEVER IT IS, THE BEAST MUST BE STOPPED!

YOU TALK A LOT, PROFESSOR! IF YOU WERE HALF A MAN, YOU'D GET A RIFLE AND PUT **YOUR** LIFE ON THE LINE TRACKING THAT THING LIKE SOME OF THE OTHERS!

WELL...?

I...IM SORRY... IT'S NOT THE KIND OF THING I CAN DO! I'LL HAVE TO WORK IN MY OWN WAY...

AND SOON ENOUGH I FOUND OUT WHAT THAT WAY WAS...

WHAT'S ALL THIS CHEMISTRY SET FOOLISHNESS SUPPOSE TO MEAN, DARNER? WHAT GOOD'LL ALL THAT STUFF DO?

MY HOPE IS IT WON'T DO GOOD, BUT **BAD**... **IT'S POISON!** AS I'VE MIXED IT, DEADLY ENOUGH TO BRING DOWN **ANY** ANIMAL...

I INTEND TO POSITION THESE ALL AROUND THE AREA WHERE THE BEAST HAS STRUCK! IT'S BOUND TO GO FOR ONE OF THEM!

DARNER, I MAY NOT HAVE YOUR FANCY EDUCATION, BUT I KNOW A FOOL THING WHEN I SEE IT...



... THIS

IS THE ONLY WAY TO GET WHAT WE'RE AFTER! AND IF YOU WEREN'T A GUTLESS WONDER, YOU'D REALIZE IT!



I REALIZE NO ONE'S DONE SO WELL WITH IT UP TILL NOW!



MAYBE YOU'LL HAVE A LITTLE MORE RESPECT FOR WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO **AFTER** MY METHOD'S HAD A CHANCE!

I WOULDN'T COUNT ON IT, MISTER DARNER!

THE CIVILIAN GUARD HAD WORKED OUT FINE! BY KNOWING EXACTLY WHERE AND WHEN EACH OF THEM WAS ON DUTY, FINDING A VICTIM WAS NEVER A PROBLEM... NO MORE THAN BRUCE DARNER'S FOOLISH PLAYING WITH POISON!

FOUND HIM RIGHT HERE, PROFESSOR... SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR LITTLE TRAPS! DIDN'T EVEN TOUCH THEM!



SURELY NO ANIMAL WOULD IGNORE THAT MEAT... UNLESS... IT REALLY WAS A... A W-WEREWOLF!



OR MY FORMULA... PERHAPS MY FORMULA WAS WRONG...

MOW, A SMART MAN MIGHT HAVE JUST GIVEN UP, BUT NOT DARNER... NOT A FOOL LIKE HIM...

LOOKS LIKE
YOUR
FIANCÉ'S
GIVEN YOU
UP FOR HIS
CHEMISTRY
SET, WILMA.

IT'S BECOME LIKE AN OBSESSION TO HIM! HE KEEPS EXPERIMENTING WITH FORMULA AFTER FORMULA! HARDLY EVEN SPEAKS TO ME... BUT AT LEAST IT'S GIVEN ME TIME TO THINK THINGS OVER AND...

IT'S TIME YOU DECIDED TO
DITCH THAT COLLEGE BOY!
YOU WON'T CATCH ME
NEGLIGENCE YOU LIKE THAT.

— 60 · 000 KNU

DARLINS!
I THINK I'VE DONE
IT! THIS NEW
POISON CAN...

WTLMA.5

BRUCE...N
WAIT...

FORGET HIM,
BABY! ALL YOU
NEED IS ME!

**GET
YOUR HANDS
OFF ME! YOU'RE NOTHING
BUT AN ANIMAL, THAD!
AN ANIMAL!!**

RAGE BOILED UP INSIDE ME LIKE A WITCH'S CAULDRON AND WITH IT, THE URGE TO KILL!

HAVING BRUCE BACK CONVINCED ME... HE'S THE ONLY ONE I EVER WANTED! BRUCE IS THE ONLY ONE!

TWILIGHT WAS BECOMING DARKNESS BY THAT TIME... PISTOL IN HAND, I SMASHED INTO DARNER'S LAB...

GONE! ONLY ONE OTHER PLACE HE COULD BE... OUT WITH HIS #@\$%& POISON TRAPS!

I RACED TOWARD THE WOODS. AS I HAD SO MANY OTHER NIGHTS WHEN THE MOON WAS FULL... RACED WITH A CURIOUS CONTENTMENT, KNOWING BRUCE DARNER WOULD NOT DIE SO EASILY AS BY MY PISTOL...

...AND I FOUND HIM WITH NO TROUBLE AT ALL!



EVEN AS I KILLED DARNER, I FELT WILMA WOULD STILL NEVER BE MINE... NOW, AS HER EYES GROW WIDE IN HORROR AT MY CHARGING FORM, I KNOW THIS IS SO, THAT **THIS** IS THE ONLY WAY...



WHAT...
WHAT'S
HAPPENING...
I'M CHANGING
BACK...

YOU'RE DYING, THAD...
I HEARD IT ALL ON
THE TAPE RECORDER
BEFORE YOU CAME
IN...

YET, I NEVER REACH HER! PAIN SUDDENLY SHOOTS THROUGH MY ENTIRE BODY, HORRIBLE BURNING... I GASP AND CLAW FOR BREATH THAT DOES NOT COME...

GAARRGGHHH.



BRUCE'S LAST FORMULA WAS A VERY SLOW ACTING POISON... WITH A STRONG BASE OF **SILVER NITRATE**... WHEN HE SAW YOU AND I TOGETHER, HE THOUGHT I'D REALLY GIVEN HIM UP...



THE PAIN IS... UNBEARABLE... EVERYTHING GROWS DARK... CAN ONLY HEAR WILMA'S ECHOING, MOCKING WORDS...

HE INJECTED THE FORMULA IN HIS OWN BODY, THAD... BECAME LIVING WEREWOLF BAIT... BAIT WHICH YOU SWALLOWED!



HMM... I WONDER IF THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION'S HEARD ABOUT THIS... WE MAY HAVE TO GET BRUCE DARNER TAKEN OFF THE SHELVES! A LITTLE INDIGESTION'S ONE THING, BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!



THE UNIVERSE IS VAST... THE FAR-FLYING GALAXIES SPRAWL ENDLESSLY. BUT THIS VASTNESS IS NOT STATIC... EACH GALAXY MOVES WITH INFINITE SLOWNESS ON A SURE COURSE. WITHIN THEM, STARS LIVE AND DIE, EXPLODING WITH NOVA FORCE, SHRIVELING TO COLD BLACK SHELLS... PLANETS ORBIT AND TURN PERISH AND FLOURISH... LIFE, IN UNCOUNTABLE VARIETY, IS SPAWNED AND DEVELOPED... ALL MOVING STEADILY, INALTERABLY, DRAWN BY THEIR OWN NEEDS AND PURPOSE! AS WAS THE INTERSTELLER SPACE CRUISER FROM EARTH WHEN SCANNING SCREENS FIRST GAVE THE ALARM OF THEIR APPROACH TOWARD.....

IT



AS THE GIANT SHIP DREW CLOSE TO THE STRANGE FORM, CAPTAIN DURWARD AND EXPEDITION DIRECTOR ELLIOT BENT FORWARD, THEIR TENSE FACES BATHED IN THE SCANNING SCREEN'S GLOW ...

... OF COURSE THERE'S A GOOD POSSIBILITY IT'S DEAD CAPTAIN, CAST INTO SPACE BY AN EXPLODING PLANET... A CORPSE DRIFTING FOREVER ...

EITHER WAY IT'S QUITE A FIND, EH, ELLIOT?

LEAVING THE CONTROL ROOM, BOTH MEN CONTINUED TALKING OVER THE STEADY POWER HUM OF THE INTER-DECK LIFT...

I RATHER HATE RISKS! IT'S BEING BROUGHT INTO THE SHIP, BUT...

OUR MISSION'S TO EXPLORE AND EXAMINE... YOU CAN'T DO A COMPLETE JOB TILL THAT THING'S IN THE LABORATORY HOLD!

... UNTIL THEY REACHED THE BRIEFING ROOM WHERE A SELECTED GROUP OF MEN WAIT...

PROBABLY THE CREATURE'S DEAD, BUT PLAY IT CLOSE TO THE VEST... IF PRELIMINARY TESTS REGISTER POSITIVE, THROW AN ENERGY SHIELD AROUND IT AND GET BACK TO THE SHIP... WE'LL TAKE IT FROM THERE!

AGAINST THE DARK VELVET EMPTINESS OF INTER-GALACTIC SPACE, THE MEN WENT ABOUT THEIR TASK, SWARMING ABOUT THE STILL, FLOATING HULK...



NO SWEAT SKIPPER! ALL TESTS NEGATIVE! IT'S BIG AND UGLY, BUT IT'S DEAD! STAND BY AT NUMBER 3 HATCH! WE'RE BRINGING IT ABOARD!

REMARKABLE! THE ODDS AGAINST AN ENCOUNTER LIKE THIS ARE... INCALCULABLE! IN FACT, I FIND IT DISTURBING...

THAT'S WHY THE MILITARY STILL CONTROLS THESE EXPLORATION TRIPS, ELLIOT... WHATEVER IT IS OUT THERE, MY BOYS CAN HANDLE IT!



METHODICALLY, THE MONSTROUS FORM WAS MOVED INTO THE LABORATORY HOLD, ITS GREAT BULK STRETCHED LIFELESSLY ON THE GLEANING METAL DECK...

DEAD OR NOT, THE SOONER I DON'T HAVE TO LOOK AT THIS THING, THE BETTER. I'LL LIKE IT!



BACK IN THE CONTROL ROOM, CAPTAIN DURWARD LOOKED UP FROM THE INTRASHIP VIEWER WITH A SMILE OF SATISFACTION ...

ONCE MY BOYS ARE OUT, ELLIOT, YOU AND YOUR TECHNICIANS CAN MOVE IN... FINDING THIS MONSTER'S GOING TO BE A REAL FEATHER, IN OUR CAPS ON EARTH!

PERHAPS WE SHOULD HAVE CONDUCTED A FEW MORE TESTS... WE CAN'T BE CERTAIN WHAT EFFECT ATMOSPHERE MAY HAVE ...

THE CREWMEN TURNED AWAY FROM THE HIDEOUS FORM SPRAWLED ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOLD, LAUGHING AND JOKING. THEY CLUSTERED NEAR THE FORWARD HATCH, AWAITING THEIR RELIEF...

WE SHOULDN'T KID ABOUT ITS LOOKS... THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A VERY INTELLIGENT CREATURE!

FISH
IF YOU'RE RIGHT, IT'S A GREAT ARGUMENT FOR STUPIDITY!

OUTER LOCK IS SEALED... YOU CAN REPRESSURIZE THE HOLD NOW... ALL READY FOR TESTING!

NO ADVERSE EFFECT ON CORPSE FROM REPRESSURIZING... IT'S UGLY AS EVER!

THE MAD SCIENTISTS CAN TAKE IT FROM HERE!

GGNYAHHHHH!

VIEW SCREENS THROUGHOUT THE SHIP FLASHED A SCENE OF UNMERCIFUL DESTRUCTION AND HORRIFYING CARNAGE...

ELLIOT! MY GOD... IT WAS DEAD! HOW...

S-SOME KIND OF FANTASTIC CONTROL OVER ITS METABOLISM! MAINTAINING SOME TYPE OF SUSPENDED ANIMATION IN DEEP SPACE... THEN UNDER THE SHIP'S ATMOSPHERE... IT REVIVED!

CAPTAIN DURWARD'S FINGER JABBED AT THE BRIGHT RED **GENERAL ALERT** BUTTON. THE SCREAMING ALARM ECHOED THROUGHOUT THE SHIP AS HE SEIZED THE VIEWER CONTROLS...

SECURITY CONTROL!
SECURITY CONTROL!
SEAL OFF THE LABORATORY HOLD... IMMEDIATELY!
ALL HATCHES, AIR-CON-
DITIONING DUCTS...
SEAL IT OFF TIGHT!



TOO LATE TO HELP THOSE POOR DEVILS TRAPPED WITH THAT THING. BUT ONCE THE HOLD'S SEALED OFF WE'LL DEPRESSURIZE AND...

CAPTAIN! IT'S LOCATED THE VIEWER SYSTEM... LOOK!

IT'S RIPPED OUT THE SYSTEM! WE CAN'T SEE WHAT IT'S DOING! WE...

SECURITY CONTROL!
CAPTAIN! THE HOLD IS SEALED OFF, BUT SOMETHING'S WRONG. WE'VE LOST CONTROL! ALL OUR CONNECTIONS NO LONGER RESPOND!



MINUTES PASSED, THEN HOURS. THE STATE OF EMERGENCY FROZE OVER INTO STALEMATE...

IT HASN'T TRIED ANYTHING, SIR... CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT IT'S DOING...

IT'LL DIE!
HATCHES ARE ENERGY-SEALED... IT CAN'T BREAK OUT AND IT CAN'T LAST IN THERE FOREVER... IT'LL STARVE OR SUFFOCATE!

SIR, YOU'RE FORGETTING ALL THE LAB EQUIPMENT! IF THAT THING'S INTELLIGENT ENOUGH TO SHORT-CIRCUIT OUR CONTROLS IT CAN...





DESPERATELY, THE EXPEDITION DIRECTOR GRABBED THE AMAZED OFFICER, DRAGGING HIM DOWN THE CORRIDOR, AWAY FROM THE ON-RUSHING HORROR, AS BEHIND THEM ...



RUNNING FOR THEIR LIVES, THE TWO MEN CLAMBERED UPON THE LIFT, CURSING ITS REGULAR, AUTOMATICALLY CONTROLLED RATE OF CLIMB...

EVOLUTION PLAYS STRANGE TRICKS! WHEREVER THIS THING'S FROM, BRILLIANT MIND POWER BECAME LINKED WITH ANIMAL INSTINCTS... WE'RE LUCKY THERE'S ONLY ONE OF THEM! COLLECTIVELY, WE MAY STILL BE ABLE TO DEFEAT IT!

WE'LL DEFEAT IT ALL RIGHT! COME ON TO THE WEAPONS DECK... I'LL SHOW THAT ~~THING~~ SOME OF OUR OWN "BRUTE STRENGTH!"

IT TOOK TIME TO CARRY THE GUARD'S BODY INTO THE HOLD! WE'D NEVER HAVE MADE IT, IF IT HADN'T DONE THAT!

HOW CAN IT BE, ELLIOT? HOW CAN SOMETHING SO GROTESQUE, SO BESTIAL ACCOMPLISH WHAT IT HAS? IT CAN'T BE MORE INTELLIGENT THAN US, IT CAN'T BE!



IT'S WORTH THE RISK TO STOP THAT THING! IT KNOWS WE CAME THIS WAY, IT'LL BE UP HERE SOON... SWING THOSE CANNONS AROUND! I WANT A CROSSFIRE ON THAT CORRIDOR!

THE ORDERS WERE CARRIED OUT IMMEDIATELY. NERVOUS, PERSPIRING GUN CREWS TENSED BEHIND THEIR WEAPONS, PRAYING THE CAPTAIN WAS WRONG, PRAYING THE CREATURE OF HORROR MIGHT STRIKE SOMEWHERE, ANYWHERE, ELSE ... THEN, A LARGE, TERRIBLE SHADOW FILLED THE CORRIDOR ...

THIS IS IT!
GET READY...
ON MY
COMMAND...

THE SHADOW CAME FORWARD QUICKLY UNHESITANTLY BECOMING ALL TOO-SOLID REALITY... MOVING FAR FASTER THAN ANY SUCH MONSTROUS BULK SHOULD...

BLAST AFTER BLAST OF RAW ENERGY SLAMMED IN TO THE TERRIFYING JUGGERNAUT CAUSING IT TO SHUDDER AND WINCE, BUT NOT HALTING ITS DESTRUCTIVE CHARGE...

YAHHHHHHHH!

OH, GOD! IT'S GOING TO KILL US ALL!

EVEN AS THE THOUGHT SCREAMED IN ELLIOT'S MIND, BLACKNESS ENSLIVED HIM! LONG MOMENTS LATER, PERHAPS HOURS, TO HIS SURPRISE, THE DARKNESS CLEARED...

I-I'M ALIVE... I DON'T BELIEVE IT... DID THE CANNONS...

NO! BUT THE PAIN FINALLY MADE IT RETREAT... CARRYING OFF AS MANY DEAD MEN AS IT COULD! NOW I KNOW HOW TO KILL IT!

I WANT EVERY MAN IN THE ENGINE ROOM! IN FULL PROTECTIVE GEAR! ENERGY BLASTS IN LARGE ENOUGH DOSES CAN HURT IT. THE CANNON PROVED THAT... IF WE CHANNEL FULL GENERATOR POWER TO JUST ONE CORRIDOR... WE'LL BLAST IT OUT OF EXISTENCE!

CAPTAIN... EVEN IF THAT WORKS, WE'LL BE WITHOUT POWER... STUCK HERE IN SPACE—HELPLESS!

CAPTAIN DURWARD WAS ADAMANT. THE CREW GATHERED IN THE ENGINE ROOM, THE LAST DITCH STAND AGAINST THE HORRENDOUS INVADER...

JUDGING FROM EVERY OTHER ATTACK, IT NEEDS VICTIMS... BUT IT CAN ONLY REACH US BY USING THE CORRIDOR. WHEN IT DOES, WE'VE GOT IT!

THE SUITS WILL PROTECT US FROM THE BLAST, BUT IF THIS DOESN'T WORK... IT'S GOT US!



ONCE AGAIN THE MEN WAITED, LONG TORTURING HOURS, SWEaty AND UNCOMFORTABLE IN THE TIGHT CONFINES OF THE PROTECTIVE SUITS... WAITED UNTIL IT SEEMED THEY WOULD SCREAM WITH WAITING... THEN, ALL TOO QUICKLY...

SIR! IT'S IN THE CORRIDOR... COMING FAST!



ALL GENERATORS ON FULL... NOW!



WITH A BANSHEE SCREAM THAT WOULD HAVE SHATTERED UNPROTECTED EARDRUMS, THE SHIP'S MIGHTY GENERATORS WHINED UNDER THE STRESS OF UNLEASHED POWER... WAVES OF CONCENTRATED ENERGY BOMBARDED THE NARROW CORRIDOR, MELTING METAL AND INSULATION... CREATING A WHIRLPOOL OF DEATH AROUND THE MONSTER, FIGURE HOWLING IN ITS MIDST...



DRAINING AND ABSORBING EVERY LAST OUNCE OF POWER IN THE THROBBING ENGINES... BUT, WHEN IT WAS OVER...

WE'VE WON! LOOK AT IT, ELIOT, LOOK AT IT!



THE MEN REMOVED THEIR HELMETS. DARKNESS CLOSED IN ON THE SHIP AS WITHOUT POWER THE LIGHTS FADED, LEAVING ONLY THE FLUORESCENT GLOW OF THE SPACE SUITS...

HERE'S YOUR INTELLIGENT CREATURE NOW...
DUST! ASHES!
WE BEAT IT.
ELLIOT!

COST US
A LOT, CAPTAIN... WE WERE
LUCKY! LET'S GET TO
THE LABORATORY HOLD.
IT HAD ITS OWN GENER-
ATOR!

THE HATCH WAS OPEN. ELLIOT REACHED IT FIRST... AND WISHED HE NEVER HAD. SUDDENLY HE KNEW THE CREATURE HADN'T MET THE SHIP BY ACCIDENT... IT HAD BEEN DRAWN! DRAWN BY SOMETHING IT NEEDED... DRAWN BY THE LIFE ABOARD!

ELLIOT! WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHAT'S WRONG?

OH LORD! IF
ONLY WE HAD
TAKEN MORE TIME...
CHECKED MORE
CLOSELY...

CAST INTO SPACE BY A
DYING PLANET, THE
CREATURE HAD BEEN
DRAWN BY INSTINCT TO
THE NEAREST LIFE...
LIFE THAT WOULD BE
VITALLY IMPORTANT TO
IT AS ... FOOD!

I-IT'S HORRIBLE.
ELLIOT... BUT WHAT...
WHAT COULD
WE HAVE
DONE?

I DON'T
KNOW, CAPTAIN...
OUR BIG MIS-
TAKE WAS IN
THINKING OF A
LIVING BEING
LIKE THAT ONLY
AS IT...

THERE WAS LIGHT IN THE LABORATORY HOLD, ILLUMINATING THE FULL SCENE OF CARNAGE AND HORROR... ILLUMINATING THE TERRIFYING FIGURES THAT SHUFFLED TOWARD DURWARD AND ELLIOT... FIGURES NOT AS LARGE AS THE CREATURE JUST KILLED YET, BUT LARGE ENOUGH TO INDICATE THEIR GROWTH RATE WAS INCREDIBLY FAST!

...INSTEAD OF HER!!

PERSONALLY I THINK THE LITTLE DEVILS ARE SORT OF CUTE, BUT I SUPPOSE DURWARD HAS RUN OUT OF ENERGY FOR HANDLING THAT SORT OF THING! THEIR MOTHER CERTAINLY LEFT THEM WELL PROVIDED FOR... AND SO YOU DON'T FEEL LEFT OUT, I'LL PROVIDE YOU WITH ANOTHER SCREAM STORY!





HEE HEE! MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT, (THAT'S YOU), AT THIS TIME I SHOULD LIKE TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE FOLLOWING STORY WHICH, ESPECIALLY ON THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT, WILL WILFULLY AND WITH MALICE AFORETHOUGHT, RENDER FEAR AND TERROR INTO THE HEARTS OF ALL WHO READ IT!

THE DEFENSE RESTS!



THE SMALL BUT PRETENTIOUS CIVIC HALL IS FILLED TO OVERFLOWING. LYDIA ALBRITTON, SINGING SENSATION OF THE ENGLISH THEATRE, IS ON TOUR THROUGH EUROPE AND THIS NIGHT HAS COME TO THE TINY NORTH GERMAN TOWN OF BRUDENHEIM.

MAYOR HERMAN BRUDENHEIM IS BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT MAN IN THE ENTIRE DISTRICT, OWNING ALMOST ALL THE LAND IN TOWN AND MUCH OF THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE. HE FANCIES HIMSELF QUITE THE DASHING LADIES-MAN... AND THE LOVELY LYDIA ALBRITTON HAS MORE THAN CAUGHT HIS FANCY.



IN TRUTH, ANY SUCCESS HE HAS HAD WITH THE DAUGHTERS OF THE TOWN'S FAMILIES IS DUE TO THE POWER HE WIELDS OVER THE GIRLS' FATHERS WHO, LACKING MORAL FIBRE, HAVE ALLOWED THEMSELVES TO BE SUBJUGATED TO WIN HIS FAVOR.



POSSESSING ALL THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A BRILLIANT CAREER, HE NONETHELESS REMAINS BUT A MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEASANTS AND MIDDLE CLASSES WHO RESPECT HIM FOR HIS REFUSAL TO LICK THE BOOTSTRAPS OF THE MAYOR.



AT THE CLOSE OF HER ENCHANTING PERFORMANCE, LYDIA ALBRITTON IS INTRODUCED TO THE MAYOR WHO IN HIS FANNING MANNER INVITES HER TO HIS HOME TO ATTEND A BALL HE IS GIVING IN HER HONOR.



IN THE SAME AUDIENCE, AND ENTRANCED TO NO LESS A DEGREE THAN THE MAYOR, BUT ONLY ABLE TO AFFORD STANDING ROOM, IS ANDREW PRESCOTT, BY CHOICE A POLITICAL ENGLISH EXILE, WHO HAS BEEN PRACTICING LAW IN THE TOWN FOR SEVERAL YEARS.



THIS REFUSAL HAS NOT ONLY EARNED HIM THE HATRED OF THE MAYOR AND HIS SOCIAL-CLIMBING FRIENDS, BUT HAS ALSO WON HIM A VERY DIFFICULT TIME IN COURT WHILE TRYING A CASE AND HIS LIST OF FAILURES FAR OUTWEIGHS HIS LIST OF TRIUMPHS, FOR IN THIS TOWN OF BRUDENHEIM, THE MAYOR IS ALSO JUDGE OF THE COURT.



GRACIOUSLY, SHE ACCEPTS THE INVITATION, AND AS THE MAYOR POMPOUSLY LEADS HER TO HIS CARRIAGE, ANDREW PRESCOTT STEPS FORTH FROM THE CROWD TO EXTEND HIS COMPLIMENTS TO THE ACTRESS.



IN THE PRESENCE OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE THE MAYOR IS TOLERANT OF THIS INTRUSION, BUT IT DEVELOPS THAT THE LAWYER AND THE ACTRESS HAD KNOWN EACH OTHER IN ENGLAND AND THIS REUNION IS A DELIGHT TO BOTH.



AT THE BALL, THE MAYOR TRIES REPEATEDLY TO INGRATIATE HIMSELF TO THE GIRL, BUT FINDS HIS INTENTIONS POLITELY SPURNED BY THE ACTRESS WHO IS ONLY CONCERNED WITH ANDREW.



CONTROLLING HIS JEALOUS FURY, THE MAYOR EXTENDS THE INVITATION TO INCLUDE ANDREW WHO ACCEPTS READILY FOR HE DOES WISH TO SPEAK FURTHER WITH HIS BEAUTIFUL FRIEND, AND TODD IS ALSO ENJOYING IMMENSELY THE MAYOR'S AGITATION.



SO PLEASED IS LYDIA WITH THE MEETING, AND SO OBVIOUSLY RELUCTANT TO HAVE IT END, THAT THE MAYOR IS FORCED TO ASK PRESCOTT TO JOIN THEM. THE LAWYER AGREES.



DESPERATELY, THE MAYOR INVITES HER TO STAY THE WEEKEND AS HIS GUEST (TO ALLOW HIM TIME TO WOO HER), BUT SHE REPLIES THAT SHE HAS PROMISED TO GO RIDING AND PICNICKING WITH ANDREW.



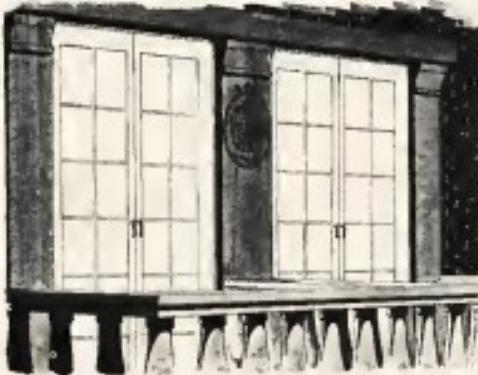
UNKNOWN TO THEM, THEY ARE BEING WATCHED



MONSTROUSLY HUGE IN SIZE, DEVOID OF FACIAL BEAUTY, UNKEMPT AND GUTTER FILTHY, GRUNTING SOFTLY TO HIMSELF NOW AND AGAIN, THE EYES OF MOLOK-THE-BRUTE MISS NOTHING OF THE MAYOR'S ATTENTION TO THE RADIANT LYDIA.



FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT HE SEES THE LAMPS ILLUMINATE THE UPSTAIRS BEDROOMS, AND THEN WATCHES AS THE MAN AND WOMAN BEGIN THEIR INDIVIDUAL PREPARATIONS FOR SLEEP.



IN HIS ROOM, ANDREW PRESCOTT IS STUNNED TO HEAR THE SCREAMS PIERCING THE NIGHT. HE HESITATES IN DISBELIEF ONLY FOR A MOMENT, THEN RUSHES TO THE BALCONY WHERE HE REALIZES THE SHRIEKS ARE FROM LYDIA'S ROOM!



AS THE GUESTS BEGIN LEAVING AND THE ACTRESS AND LAWVER ARE LED UPSTAIRS TO THEIR RESPECTIVE ROOMS, THE HUGE MAN SHAMBLES AWAY FROM THE WINDOW AND HIDES IN THE NEARBY TREES.



QUIETLY, MOLOK MOVES TO THE TRELLIS LEADING TO THE BALCONY CONNECTING THE TWO BEDROOMS AND THERE HE CLIMBS UPWARD. WITH ANIMAL SILENCE HE GAINS THE BALCONY AND ENTERS THE GIRL'S BEDCHAMBER.



LEAPING THE DIVIDER BETWEEN, HE BURSTS INTO THE NOW UNLIGHTED ROOM AND DIMLY SEES THE SHADOWY MONSTER LOOMING OVER THE BROKEN AND BLOODED FORM OF THE ACTRESS!



TO ANDREW PRESCOTT, MORE THAN JUST THE CRUMPLED AND BLOOD-SPLATTERED BODY OF A DEAR FRIEND LIES DEAD IN THE MOONLIGHT; A DREAM ONLY HOURS OLD HAS BEEN SHATTERED FOREVER. IN HORROR AND BLIND RAGE, HE ATTACKS THE FRIEND WHO LIFTS HIM EASILY AND CASTS HIM ASIDE.



AICHING, HE STRUGGLES TO HIS FEET JUST AS THE SERVANTS BREAK DOWN THE DOOR. THE MAYOR, AND OTHER GUESTS STRIDE IN, THEIR LAMPS SHOWING PRESCOTT STANDING OVER THE DEAD GIRL.

ONLY SEMI-CONSCIOUS FROM THE IMPACT AGAINST A WALL, HE IS BARELY AWARE OF THE HUGE FORM ESCAPING OVER THE BALCONY, AND HARDLY HEARS THE POUNDING AND THE SHOUTING OF VOICES OUTSIDE THE LOCKED DOOR.



FOR THE MAYOR, THIS OPPORTUNITY IS TOO GOOD TO RESIST. HE ORDERS HIS SERVANTS TO SIEZE THE LAWYER WHO, STILL SOMEWHAT DAZED, TRIES HOPELESSLY TO EXPLAIN ABOUT THE REAL MURDERER. THE MAYOR ONLY LAUGHS AT HIM.



THE MAYOR CITES THE LOCKED DOOR, THE NEARNESS OF THE TWO ROOMS BY WAY OF THE BALCONY, AND EVEN IMPLIES THE ACTRESS WAS KILLED RESISTING THE LAWYER'S ADVANCES. IF PRESCOTT WISHES TO HAVE HIS FANTASTIC TALE BELIEVED, THE MAYOR CONTINUES, HE WILL HAVE TO USE MORE THAN MERE WORDS...HE WILL HAVE TO PRODUCE EVIDENCE!

ANGRY AND STRUGGLING, ANDREW IS TAKEN FROM THE ROOM AND CAST INTO A DUNGEON BENEATH THE HOUSE WHERE HE IS KEPT UNDER GUARD FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE NIGHT. THROUGH LONG, SLEEPLESS HOURS, HIS AGONY OF FRUSTRATION AND REMORSE ALLOWS HIM NOT A MOMENT'S PEACE.



IN THE PALE LIGHT OF EARLY MORNING HE IS ROUSED AND BROUGHT TO THE COURTHOUSE TO STAND TRIAL. NONE OF THE VILLAGERS ARE THERE AND WITH SINKING HEART HE IS SUDDENLY AWARE THAT PROBABLY NO ONE KNOWS OF HIS PLIGHT WHICH, FROM THE MAYOR'S POINT OF VIEW, IS VERY FORTUNATE INDEED.



GLANCING AROUND THE NEARLY EMPTY COURTROOM, THE LAWYER RECOGNIZES THE SIX-MAN JURY AS BEING THE MAYOR'S CLOSEST CRONIES, A GROUP HE HAD ENCOUNTERED IN COURT MANY TIMES IN THE PAST, A GROUP WHO UNFAILINGLY RENDERED A VERDICT AGAINST HIM AND WHO WERE ONLY ON THE JURY WHEN THE MAYOR HIMSELF HAD A STAKE IN THE CASE.



AT EVERY POINT WHERE PRESCOTT, CONSUMED WITH FURY AND DEJECTION, RISES TO OBJECT OR DEFEND HIMSELF, THE MAYOR ASKS FOR EVIDENCE! EVIDENCE OF PERJURY, EVIDENCE OF HIS INNOCENCE, EVIDENCE OF ANOTHER'S GUILT! EVIDENCE! EVIDENCE!



SITTING IN THE JUDGE'S CHAIR, THE MAYOR SMUGLY PERMITS ANDREW THE PRIVILEGE OF DEFENDING HIMSELF, YET PRESCOTT'S PLEAS TO BE GIVEN TIME TO PREPARE HIS DEFENSE FALL ON DEAF TARS. THE TRIAL PROCEEDS.



GALLED BY THE MAYOR, WITNESS AFTER WITNESS COMES FORTH, TESTIFYING IN OUTRAGEOUS LIES HOW THEY SAW PRESCOTT MAKE IMPROPER ADVANCES AT THE BALL, HOW THEY HEARD HIM VOW TO WIN THE LADY'S AFFECTION, EVEN HEARD HIM THREATEN HER WITH VIOLENCE UNLESS SHE AGREED TO HIS WILL.



GLARING INTO THE SMIRKING EYES OF THE MAYOR, INTO THE TWITTERING, DISINTERESTED FACES OF THE JURY, PRESCOTT KNOWS HIS POSITION IS HOPELESS. THE VERDICT IS SWIFT... GUILTY; AND THE PUNISHMENT, DEATH BY FLOGGING AND HANGING!



PREScott KNOWS FROM PAST EXPERIENCE THAT NO TIME WILL BE WASTED IN CARRYING OUT THE SENTENCE. AS HE IS BEING LED AWAY TO THE EXECUTION DOCKET, THE TWISTED LAUGHTER FROM INSIDE THE COURTROOM MADDENS HIM TO THE POINT OF FRENZY! WITH BLUDGEONING FISTS HE OVERPOWERS THE DULL-WITTED GUARDS AND ESCAPES INTO THE WOODS!



NEELING BY THE TRELLIS BENEATH THE BEDROOM WINDOWS, HE FINDS SEVERAL CLEAR AND UNMISTAKABLY HUGE FOOTPRINTS. MUTTERED CURSES RUMBLE IN HIS BREAST FOR HE NOW KNOWS THAT IF THE MAYOR HAD TAKEN BUT A MOMENT TO INVESTIGATE HE, PREScott, WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO TRIAL.



AT PISTOL-POINT, HE FORCES THE QUIVERING MAYOR TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO THE COURTHOUSE. UPON ENTERING, THE MAYOR ALL BUT COLLAPSES, FOR IN THE JURY BOX, BOUND AND GAGGED, ARE HIS SIX COHORTS!



SEVERAL NIGHTS PASS BEFORE PREScott RETURNS FROM THE SAFETY OF THE FOREST AND CROSSES THE LAWN TO THE REAR OF THE MANOR'S HOUSE.



ENRAGED, HE STEALTHILY GAINS ENTRANCE TO THE HOUSE AND FINDS THE MAYOR IN HIS STUDY.



TREMBLING VIOLENTLY, STAMMERING APOLOGIES, WITH BEADS OF SWEAT DANCING ON HIS BROW, THE PANICKY MAYOR IS THRUST HEAVILY INTO HIS SEAT ON THE BENCH AND SECURELY TIED AND GAGGED.



IN PROPER LAWYER FASHION, PRESCOTT THEN BEGINS HIS ADDRESS. HE ASSAULTS THEM FOR THE MOCKERY THEY MAKE OF JUSTICE, AND THEIR PARASITIC WAY OF LIFE, AND HE ENUMERATES THE SOCIAL CRIMES THEY HAVE COMMITTED AGAINST THEIR FELLOW TOWNSMEN IN THEIR GREED FOR POWER AND POSITION.



MOLOK-THE-BRUTE THEY HAD CALLED HIM THEN. NOW, AFTER MANY YEARS IN A NIGHTMARISH PRISON FROM WHICH HE HAD RECENTLY ESCAPED, THEY MIGHT BETTER CALL HIM MOLOK-THE-MADMAN, WHO LIVES ONLY FOR REVENGE; THINKING THE ACTRESS IMPORTANT TO THE MAYOR, MOLOK HAD KILLED HER!



WITH A GRIM SIGH OF FINALITY, THE LAWYER STEPS FROM THE ROOM, CLOSES AND LOCKS THE DOOR AND THROWS AWAY THE KEY. CROSSING THE MOONLIT FIELD BEHIND THE COURTHOUSE, HE DOESN'T EVEN TURN HIS HEAD AT THE SOUNDS OF VIOLENT SCREAMS AND THUNDEROUS CARNAGE AS HE MAKES HIS WAY TO THE SEA AND A WAITING BOAT.



HE REMINDS THEM OF ONE INJUSTICE IN PARTICULAR, ONE OF PRESCOTT'S FIRST CASES IN BRUDENHEIM, A CASE HE HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN CONCERNING A MAN CALLED MOLOK, WHO THIS SAME GROUP HAD FOUND GUILTY OF MURDERING A YOUNG GIRL. AND MOLOK'S ONLY DEFENSE WAS THAT HE WAS INNOCENT AND ONLY GUILTY OF SEEING THE MAYOR HIMSELF COMMIT THE DEED.



FOR PRESCOTT TO REST HIS CASE AND TO ESTABLISH HIS OWN INNOCENCE, THE COURT MUST NOW AT LONG LAST "PERMIT" HIM TO PRESENT HIS EVIDENCE! SO SAYING, HE OPENS THE DOOR AND USHERS THE LUSTING, EAGER MOLOK INTO THEIR PRESENCE! STIFLED MOANS, CRYING AND MUFFLED SHRIEKS OF TERROR FROM THE SEVEN CAPTIVES ONLY INCITE THE MONSTER AS HE LUMBERS TOWARD THEM.



HEEEHEE!
OH REVENGE CAN
BE SO SWEET!
PRESCOTT'S WORDS
MAY HAVE MADE THEM
FEEL SORRY FOR THEIR
MISDEEDS, BUT I CAN
GUARANTEE THAT WHEN
MOLOK FINISHED WITH
THEM, THEY **REALLY**
FELT BAD! IN FACT, THEY
WERE ALL **BROKE-UP**
ABOUT IT! LIKE THEY
SAY, FIENDS, ACTIONS
SPEAK LOUDER
THAN WORDS!
HEEEHEEE!



SEARCHING FOR ANOTHER GORY-STORY, FEAR FANS? LET ME BE YOUR GUIDE INTO THE UNCHARTED WATERS OF THE WEIRD AS WE GO EXPLORING FOR EXCITEMENT AND END UP ON THE...

ISLAND AT WORLD'S END!



"HE WAS A LARGE MAN, AND STRONG... TO HAVE BEEN LESS, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN DEAD..."

AIN'T NATURAL...ADRIFT
IN AN OPEN BOAT IN
WATERS LIKE THESE...



"MARCH 6--OUR PASSENGER IS RECOVERING...
TODAY FOR THE FIRST TIME, HE COULD ANSWER
QUESTIONS..."

NAME'S STURGIS, SIR! FIRST
MATE OF THE "PRODIGAL"...
'LEAST I WAS! WE WERE TWO
YEARS OUT OF SALEM WHEN
THE TROUBLE HIT... WORST
SORT OF TROUBLE ON A
WHALING SHIP..."



"...MUTINY!"



"THE CAPTAIN WAS KILLED AND WE THREE REMAINING OFFICERS SET ADRIFT WITH A FEW SUPPLIES... I
MANAGED TO SNEAK OFF MY PISTOL..."



"IN TIME, WE BECAME ANIMALS... RAGING FOR SURVIVAL, THE OPEN BOAT OUR JUNGLE! FOR THE OTHERS, REASON FAILED... FOR ME, THE PISTOL
DIDN'T..."



"THEN BEGAN THE AWFUL DRIFTING... SLOWLY, STEADILY... **SOUTH!** SOUTH TOWARD UNKNOWN WATERS... SOUTH TOWARD ICE AND SILENCE... SOUTH TOWARD THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD!"



"BUNDLED IN THE CLOTHING OF DEAD MEN... LIVING MEAGERLY ON THEIR FOOD SHARES... I DRIFTED. BUT EVEN DRIFTING THINGS CAN REACH A DESTINATION... AND SO I REACHED THE ISLAND!"



"COLD, DESOLATE, LONELY... LIKE A LAST STOP BROKE ETERNITY! NOT MUCH, BUT ALL THAT WAS LEFT ME... I BEGAN TO EXPLORE..."



"MY SEARCH FOR SIGNS OF LIFE LED ME TO OTHER SIGNS... OF DEATH!"





"I'VE SEEN THE WILDEST SAVAGES OF OUR WESTERN PLAINS AND THE GREAT APES OF AFRICA'S JUNGLES... THIS WAS NEITHER... AND IT WAS BOTH! BUT THERE WAS NO TIME FOR CURIOSITY..."



"AND NO CHANCE TO USE THE PISTOL AGAIN... SHRIEKING AND SCREAMING WITH BEAST-LIKE FEROCITY THEY CHARGED!"



"A HAIRY, OBSCENE TIDE SWEEP OVER... MY LAST THOUGHT WAS OF THE GNAWED WHITE BONES BENEATH MY FEET!"



"FUMES OF SULPHUR AND PRICKLES OF HEAT FORCED
MY SWIRLING MIND TO CONSCIOUSNESS..."

I'M INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN...
OR IS IT A VOLCANO? IF THOSE
THINGS I WAS FIGHTING
MUST HAVE LEFT ME TO
HERE... WHY?



"MY PISTOL WAS THROWN IN WITH ME, YET I DREW
LITTLE COMFORT FROM IT..."

DON'T LIKE THESE
IDOLS! MAKE THE
LEDGE LOOK
LIKE...

A PLACE OF
SACRIFICE!

DOWN BELOW!
SOMETHING'S
STIRRING...



IMPOSSIBLE!
HOW CAN SHE---



YAAAAAAA



"WHAT THE MIND CANNOT COMPREHEND, IT SOMETIMES SHUTS OUT... ONLY A MELODIC SOFT VOICE PULLED ME FROM THE BLACK BARRIER IT HAD THROWN UP..."

I WENT FORTH FOR A SACRIFICE, BUT FIND INSTEAD A PRINCE!

I AM CTHYLLA, LAST OF THE GREAT ELDER RACE... HIGH PRIESTESS OF DREAD SHOGGATH!

RUINS OF AN OLD CITY... HIDDEN AWAY IN THIS MOUNTAIN...

IT WAS NOT ALWAYS SO! THE GREAT WARS... THE MIGHTY SNOWS... WE WERE DRIVEN UNDERGROUND! SOME REMAINED... DEGENERATED INTO BEASTS... THE HAIRY ONES ABOVE!

THEY ADAPTED WHILE YOUR PEOPLE DIED OUT DOWN HERE...

WHILE I LIVE, THE ELDERS MAY LIVE... LONG HAVE I PRAYED TO SHOGGATH FOR ONE TO SHARE MY DESTINY... MY THRONE... MY LIFE!

'HER EYES LOCKED WITH MINE, PEERING DEEP... SUDDENLY I COULD NO LONGER SEE ANYTHING BUT HER... CTHYLLA!"

... THE ELDER RACE SHALL THRIVE AGAIN!

"BUT SOMETHING DARK CLOUDED MY FEELINGS... MADE ME UNEASY..."

DEEP... COULD REACH STRAIGHT INTO HELL...

YOUR DREAD IS OF SHOGGATH, AND HEREIN HE DWELLS... FEARFUL AND MIGHTY! THE HAIRY ONES STILL SACRIFICE TO HIM...

...BUT SHOGGATH KNOWS THE CHOSEN ONES! THIS YOU MUST LEARN!

CYNILLA!
THE WELL!

"SHE DID NOT FALL... HOW COULD SHE NESTLED IN THE PALM OF THAT OBSCENITY AS WHEN FIRST I SAW HER?"

JOIN ME! DO NOT BE AFRAID... SHOW GREAT SHOGGATH HIS PRIESTESS NOW HAS A PRIEST! COME... NOW!

"AGAIN OUR EYES LOCKED, AND AGAIN--GOD FORBID--I OBEYED!"

"NOW WE TRAVELED UP... UP! IN THE GRIP OF THAT NEBULOUS MONSTROSITY... BUT MY THOUGHTS WERE ONLY OF THE SOFT FIGURE AT MY SIDE... MY QUEEN... MY CYNILLA!"

SHOGGATH WAS DENIED WHEN I FOUND YOU... HE ACHES FOR FULFILLMENT...

AH! THE HAIRY ONES HAVE ANTICIPATED. THEY KNOW BETTER THAN TO DISAPPOINT HIM!



"THIS TIME NO MERCIFUL FAINT OBSCURED MY VISION! THIS TIME I SAW ALL!"

DIFFERENT AS IT WAS, IT WAS A HUMAN CREATURE! HOW CAN SHE FIND SUCH JOY!



"EVEN AS I LEAPED I KNEW IT WAS NO ACCIDENT THE MEN-CREATURES HAD PLACED ME ON THE LEDGE... LEFT ME THE PISTOL..."

"I'LL BE NO PART OF A LIFE LIKE THIS!"



"IN THE THUNDER OF THE WEAPON, THEY HAD BEEN A GLIMMER OF HOPE AGAINST SHOGGATH... EVEN AS I DESPERATELY DID!"

SHOGGATH! BRING HIM BACK! BRING HIM BACK TO ME!

PAK-KON!



"BUT IT WAS NOT THE REHEMOTH THAT FELL..."



"I DID NOT HEAR HER SCREAM, NOR DID I LOOK BACK IN MY FRANTIC SCRAMBLE FOR FREEDOM. BEHIND ME A MOURNFUL WAIL ROSE IN PITCH TO A DREADFUL RUMBLE..."



"FEAR DROVE MY LEGS DOWN THAT SLOPE OF ROCK AND ICE... NOTHING BROKE MY FLIGHT!"



"WHAT HAD BEEN A RUMBLE SPLIT THROUGH THE AIR, NOW LIKE AN EXPLOSION! IN HIS GRIEF AND RAGE WAS SHOGGATH BREAKING FREE OF THE CRATER? AS I REACHED THE BOAT, NO DESIRE MOVED ME TO SEE... I PUSHED OFF PREFERING THE SLOW FREEZING DEATH AHEAD TO THE MONSTROUS INSANITY THAT STORMED BEHIND!"



"DO YOU BELIEVE,
CAPTAIN? CAN THESE
THINGS HAVE
HAPPENED TO ME?"

"I BELIEVE THE MIND OF A
FREEZING, SLOWLY DYING
MAN CAN MAKE ANYTHING
POSSIBLE... YOU
SHOULD REST..."



"AFTER DAYS ADRIFF,
I THOUGHT THAT TOO,
BUT I KEEP SEEING HER
EYES... LOCKED DEEP IN
MINE... PROMISING
A WORLD...
CTHULLA..."



"MARCH 10--STURGIS HAS RECOVERED, YET HE PROWL'S THE DECKS MOODY AND QUIET, STARING AT THE SEA AS THOUGH LOOKING FOR SOMETHING..."

MAN, YOU'VE GOT TO GET HOLD OF YOURSELF...YOU...

SHE BLOWS!
SHE BLOWS!

THAT'S NO WHALE'S SPOUT! IT'S STEAM...MIST! GETTING CLOSER! /



DESPITE THE HORROR, HE DIED SILENTLY. LATER, THE CREW LIKED TO THINK HE DID IT TO SAVE THE SHIP... NO MATTER... BUT IN THE ONLY WAY LEFT HIM, STURGIS HAD GONE BACK... BACK TO CTHYLLA!



WHAT HAPPENED TO GOOP OL' SHOGGATH? NO ONE KNOWS. HE WAS NEVER CAUGHT... BUT IF HE IS, YOU CAN REST ASSURED IT WILL BE RED-HANDED! AND YOU'LL BE RED-FACED IF YOU MISS MY NEXT ISSUE!



GRAB YOUR RIFLES, RABID READERS. WE'RE GOING ON A HAUNTING EXPEDITION INTO TREACHEROUS TERROR-TORY TO SEEK OUT SOME REALLY BIG GAME! YOU'LL NEED ALL YOUR NERVE AS WE PLUNGE INTO THE LAIR OF...



THE SWAMP GOD!

CROFT, THIS IS CRAZY!
CHASING AROUND AFTER SOME INDIAN LEGEND!

YOU CAN'T BE SURE WHAT WE'LL FIND DOUGLAS' NOBOPY'S BEEN THIS DEEP INTO THE SWAMP BEFORE. RIGHT, JOHNNY?

SOMEWHERE IN THE DISTANCE CAME THE LOW RUMBLE OF APPROACHING THUNDER; FLASHES OF HEAT LIGHTNING BRIGHTENED THE NIGHT SKY... JOHN KIMA EASED UP ON THE POLE AND LET THE DUGOUT DRIFT IN A BRIEF STRETCH OF CLEAR WATER. ALREADY HE WAS HAVING REGRETS ABOUT THE EXPEDITION...

NO WHITE MAN, MR CROFT... FOR CENTURIES MY PEOPLE HAVE MADE THIS AREA THEIR HOME... ISOLATED AND PRIMITIVE!

BUT YOU'RE AN EDUCATED MAN KIMA... YOU BELIEVE THIS "SWAMP GOD" STUFF?

A HERON SCREECHED AND WINGED SKYWARD THROUGH THE DARKNESS, THEN ONLY THE MEN'S VOICES BROKE THE LAYER OF SILENCE THAT HUNG OVER THE SWAMP... THE SILENCE OF ANTICIPATION... PERHAPS OF THE APPROACHING STORM...

I BELIEVE ANY LEGEND HAS SOME ROOTS IN FACT! SOMETHING VERY REAL AND VERY TERRIBLE, STALKS IN THIS SWAMP!

AND JOHNNY'S FIXED IT SO YOU AND I GET FIRST CRACK AT IT, DOUGLAS!

EAGLES TO ELEPHANTS, I'VE BAGGED THEM ALL, KIMA... NOTHING IN HERE CAN BE THAT UNUSUAL!

UNUSUAL ENOUGH TO LEVEL ENTIRE VILLAGES UNUSUAL ENOUGH THAT GENERATIONS OF MY TRIBE HAVE MADE SACRIFICES TO APPEASE IT! HUMAN SACRIFICES!

H-HUMAN SACRIFI--COME OFF IT, KIMA! THIS DAY AND AGE? IF THERE'S MORE THAN AN OVERSIZED ALL-GATOR AROUND, I'LL EAT IT!

THIS SWAMP IS OLD...DEEP... UNTouched BY TIME! PAST AND PRESENT MEAN LITTLE HERE...

I'M OF A PRIMITIVE AND DIVINE PEOPLE... I'VE TRIED TO CHANGE THEIR WAYS... IT WAS MY HOPE THE TWO OF YOU COULD HELP!

DON'T GET SORE, JOHNNY! DOUGLAS AND I ARE TOP HUNTERS... IF ANYONE CAN NAIL YOUR "SWAMP GOD," WE CAN!

THUNDER REBONDED OVER-HEAD AND DROPS OF RAIN BEGAN PELTING THE THREE MEN IN THE DUGOUT...

WHAT'S UP? WHY ARE WE STOPPING?

WE CAN GO NO FURTHER... THIS IS THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE, THE KILLING GROUND OF THE SWAMP GOD!



WHEN THE SWAMP GOD'S SACRIFICE WAS PREPARED, A BLAST FROM THIS HORN WAS SAID TO SUMMON HIM FORTH...

MOMENTARILY, ONLY THE SOUND OF THE RAIN WAS AUDIBLE IN THE SWAMP, THEN THE INDIAN GUIDE'S LIPS TOUCHED THE OLD HORN, FILLING THE NIGHT WITH A LONG WAIL, ECHOING LIKE THE CRIES OF A WOUNDED ANIMAL...TORTURED AND UNEARTHLY!





THE SWAMP'S STIFLING AIR
WAS RENT BY A HUGE THUNDER-
CLAP, QUICKLY FOLLOWED BY
THE CRACKLING BRILLIANCE
OF LIGHTNING, ETCHING THE
AREA IN AN EERIE GLOW!

TYRANNOSAURUS!
KIMA WAS RIGHT...
IT'S SURVIVED TIME/
NURTURED ON
H-HUMAN
SACRIFICE...

OH, MY GOD!

DOUGLAS! IT'S
T-TREMENDOUS,...
WE CAN'T--

THESE RIFLES
ARE HI-POWERED
ENOUGH TO STOP
ANYTHING! FIRE,
YOU FOOL!
FIRE!

THE GUNS!
THEY'RE NOT
FIRING! THEY'RE
NOT FIRI----



OH, LORD...
IT'S D-DEVOURING
CROFT!

CROFT'S HIDEOUS DYING SCREAMS
MINGLED WITH THE SAVAGE SOUNDS
OF THE RAMPAGING BEHEMOTH, SENT
DOUGLAS THRASHING THROUGH THE
MURKY WATER,..MUD AND SLIME BE-
LOW CAUGHT AND GRABBED AT HIM,
REDUCING HIS MOTION TO THAT OF A
MAN IN A DREAM...

KIMA! I THOUGHT
THAT T-THING GOT
YOU WITH THE
DUGOUT!

NO, MR. DOUGLAS
... I GOT AWAY
AFTER SOUNDING
THE HORN.



GOOD THING TOO! YOU MIGHT HAVE ENDED UP LIKE CROFT! BLASTED RIFLES... FINE WEAPONS FOR YEARS! HOW COULD THEY GO WRONG NOW?

NO BULLETS, MR. DOUGLAS. I REMOVED THEM WHEN I LOADED THE DUGOUT!

YOU DID WHAT? I DON'T UNDERSTAND, WHY--KIMA! WHAT'RE YOU DOING? NO!

AGAIN THE HIDEOUS SOUND OF THE SACRIFICIAL HORN ROSE THROUGH THE SWAMP...

KIMA! WHY?
THE THING'LL HEAR IT...
GIVE ME A HAND! HELP
ME OUT OF HERE!
THAT MONSTER'S
COMING...
PLEASE!!

HOPELESSLY, DOUGLAS CLAWED AND SCRAPED AT THE MUD AND GRASS OF THE BANK ONLY TO FIND THE MIRE OF THE BOTTOM SLIPPING BEHNEATH HIS SCRAMBLING FEET... EVEN AS HOT REPTILIAN BREATH SPRAYED OVER HIM, ABOVE HIS OWN SCREAMS HE COULD HEAR JOHN KIMA'S FADING WORDS...

SINCE FROM NOW ON, I'M USING OUTSIDERS ONLY!!

IT'S AS I SAID,
MR. DOUGLAS, WITH
YOUR HELP I'M CHANGING
THE WAYS OF MY PEOPLE!
THEY'LL CEASE DYING
OUT FROM
SACRIFICES...

HMMMM...
IT APPEARS DOUGLAS IS MORE SELF-SACRIFICING THAN I THOUGHT! NOW, BEFORE THE SWAMP GOD PUTS THE BITE ON HIM, WHY DON'T YOU NIBBLE AT MY NEXT GOODIE?

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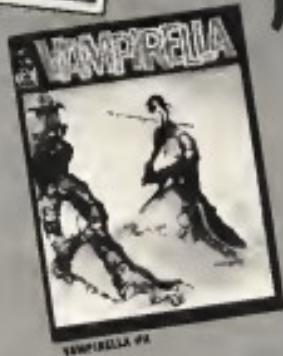
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THE BROODING MENACE OF...

THE CHANGELING!

GENE COLAN

IT WAS LATE AFTERNOON, BUT DARKNESS HAD ALREADY OVERTAKEN MUCH OF THE AGING MANSION'S INTERIOR, ADDING TO THE SINISTER EFFECT OF ITS RAMBLING ARCHITECTURE. FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE LEAVING BOSTON, RACHEL MEREDITH WAS HAVING REGRETS...

THIS WAY MISS.
MR. HAZELTINE'S
BEEN WAITING...

ALL THOSE
STARES FROM
THE TOWNSPEOPLE
WHEN I SAID I
WAS COMING HERE
...SMALL WONDER
I'M NERVOUS!

THE BUTLER USHERED RACHEL INTO THE LIBRARY. SHADOWS CAST BY THE FLICKERING FLAMES OF THE FIREPLACE ADDED ONE MORE MACABRE TOUCH TO THE OLD BUILDING'S GLOOM. COLD EYES PEERED BALEFULLY AT HER FROM UNDER THE DARK BROW OF THE MAN FACING HER...

I'M EMMETT HAZELTINE,
MISS MEREDITH. WELCOME TO MY
HOUSE. MY LAWYER GAVE YOU A
GLOWING RECOMMENDATION...
I'M SURE YOU'LL BE A FINE GOVERN-
ESS FOR THE BOY.

T-THANK YOU,
MR. HAZELTINE...
I HOPE YOUR
WIFE AND
SON THINK
SO TOO. I
CERTAINLY WILL
TR---

EMMETT HAZELTINE'S FACE GREW DARKER...

NO ONE TOLD YOU? MY WIFE'S BEEN IN AN ASYLUM SINCE JUST AFTER GIVING BIRTH... INCURABLY INSANE! WHAT THE BOY THINKS DOESN'T MATTER!

I'M SORRY... I-I DIDN'T KNOW... BUT IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THE CHILD AND I GET ALONG, OR ELSE...

THAT'S BETWEEN YOU AND HIM! MY WORK HERE IN THE LIBRARY DEMANDS ALL MY TIME... IT'S ESSENTIAL! HANDLE THE BOY AS YOU WILL!

THIS TIME OF DAY, HE'S USUALLY IN THE GARDEN... BY THE POND. LATHROP WILL SHOW YOU THE WAY!

HAZELTINE FACED HIS BOOK SHELVES SHUTTING RACHEL OUT WITHOUT

CHANCE OF REPLY. THE BUTLER APPEARED AND LEAD HER TO THE BACK OF THE HOUSE, OUTSIDE INTO THE FADING SUNLIGHT...

MASTER DONALD! MASTER DONALD, I'VE BROUGHT MISS MEREDITH, YOUR NEW GOVERNESS...

WHAT'S BEHIND YOUR BACK? WHAT ARE YOU HIDING?

NOTHING, LATHROP...

RACHEL FELT HERSELF AT ONCE IMPRESSED AND REPULLED BY THE BOY. NEAT AND HANDSOME, YET SOMEHOW DISTANT AND REMOVED, HIS DELICATE FEATURED FACE AN IMMOBILE MASK. AS THEY APPROACHED, DONALD BROUGHT HIS HAND OUT FROM BEHIND HIS BACK...

...NOTHING BUT THIS!

DEAR LORD! IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN KILLED BY SOME KIND OF... A... ANIMAL!

FLUSHED WITH ANGER, THE BUTLER SPRANG FORWARD
SENDING THE MUTILATED CARCASS FLYING FROM THE
CHILD'S GRIP...

YOU LITTLE MONSTER!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR TRICKS! TIME
YOU LEARNED A
LESSON...

NO, MR.
LATHROP!

AS LONG AS I'M GOVERNESS,
YOU'RE NEVER TO LAY A HAND
TO THIS BOY! ANY CHILD IS
NATURALLY CURIOUS ABOUT
DEATH...THAT'S WHY HE HAD IT!

RACHEL
TOOK THE BOY TO
HIS ROOM, THEN BURST INTO
THE LIBRARY OUTRAGED AND
ANNNOYED, REPEATING THE
INCIDENT TO THE BROODING
MASTER OF HAZELTINE HOUSE...

IT'S NOTHING
TO ME, MISS MEREDITH!
WHERE THE BOY'S CONCERNED
LATHROP WILL OBEY YOUR
WISHES! NOW IF YOU'RE

VERY WELL,
MISS, WE'LL SEE...
SEE HOW YOU FEEL
WHEN YOU HEAR
ABOUT THE FIRST
GOVERNESS!

DONE DISTURBING MY
RESEARCH...

JUST ONE
MORE THING, MR.
HAZELTINE... ANOTHER WOMAN
HAD MY JOB. WHAT HAPPENED
TO HER?

HAZELTINE'S LARGE, STRONG HANDS BROUGHT
HIS BOOK SHUT WITH A LOUD SNAP. RACHEL
COULD NOT BE SURE IF IT WERE THE MAN'S
WORDS OR THE BOOK'S TITLE THAT SENT A
SHIVER THROUGH HER...

SHE WAS KILLED, MISS MEREDITH!

BY SOME
MANNER OF WILD
ANIMAL, THE AUTHORI-
TIES SEEMED TO THINK...

THE CHILL OF
FORBODING STAYED WITH HER THROUGH THE
EVENING, UNTIL BEDTIME...

I'M NOT SORRY ABOUT THE
CAT, IT SCRATCHED ME ONCE,
I'M GLAD IT WAS KILLED, BUT
HAVING SOMEONE TAKE MY PART
WAS NICE... NO ONE EVER DID
IT BEFORE!

DON'T WORRY,
DONALD. I'M
HERE TO HELP
WHENEVER I
CAN... NOW YOU
SHOULD BE
GOING TO SLEEP...

OCULT
LURE



RACHEL PAUSED AT THE WINDOW. THE GARDEN BELOW WAS A DARK MASS OF SHRUBBERY AND SHADOWS! THE FINE HAIR ON THE BACK OF HER NECK SUDDENLY TINGLED. FOR AN INSTANT, ONE OF THE SHADOWS SEEMED TO MOVE, THEN MELT INTO THE DARKNESS...

I-I MUST BE TIRED...THE STRAIN OF THE FIRST DAY...

WEARILY SHE RETURNED TO HER OWN ROOM. RACHEL COULD NOT BE SURE, BUT AS HER HEAVY EYELIDS CLOSED THERE SEEMED TO BE A FAINT SHUFFLING SOUND IN THE HALL, PAUSING, THEN MOVING ALONG PAST, DOWN TOWARD THE ROOMS OF THE OTHER SERVANTS...

WITH DONALD...

DONALD! DONALD! HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO LEARN HISTORY WHILE STARING OUT THAT WINDOW?

THE NIGHT'S STRANGENESS FADED INTO MORNING AND THE FIRST OF HER TUTORING

THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON...SOMETHING IN THE GARDEN!

IT'S HAPPENED AGAIN! IT'S HAPPENED AGAIN!

GOD HELP US!
IT'S LATHROP!
LIKE THE HOUND
OF THE HELL HAD
RUN 'IM TO EARTH!



RACHEL STARED, TRANSPiXED WITH HORROR, THEN SLOWLY NOTICED A CHILLING SOUND... A SOFT CHILDISH SNICKER...

DONALD!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
STOP IT! A MAN'S
DIED OUT THERE...

ONLY LATHROP,
NASTY OLD LATHROP!
I HATED HIM AND HE
HATED ME... EVERYONE
HATES ME...

THAT'S A TERRIBLE THING TO SAY... IT'S NOT TRUE!
WHAT ABOUT ME? WHAT ABOUT YOUR FATHER?

HE'S WORSE THAN LATHROP.
WORSE THAN ANYONE...
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE
WHO DOESNT MISS MEREDITH...
THE ONLYONE

RACHEL WANTED TO CONTRADICT THE TERRIBLE ACCUSATION OF THE SMALL SOLEMN FACE, BUT THERE WAS NO WAY, DONALD'S WORDS WEIGHED HEAVILY ON HER UNTIL EVENING WHEN SHE COULD STAND IT NO MORE...

MR. HAZELTINE, I'VE GOT TO SPEAK TO YOU ABOUT DONALD...

THERE'S NO NEED, AFTER WHAT'S HAPPENED TO LATHROP, EVERY OTHER SERVANT'S QUIT... I SEE NO REASON FOR YOU TO STAY ON!



A CHANGELING, MISS MEREDITH! DO YOU KNOW OF THEM? SPAWN OF THE DEVIL'S CREATURES, LEFT IN THE CRADLE IN EXCHANGE FOR HUMAN INFANTS... MY CHILD WAS STOLEN, AND THIS... LEFT IN HIS PLACE!

WHY ELSE DO YOU THINK MY WIFE WENT MAD?!

THE PURE FURY OF THE EMMETT HAZELTINE'S WORDS HIT RACHEL LIKE MALLETS. SHE BACKED SLOWLY FROM THE ROOM...

BUT SOME-DAY I'LL FIND IT... THE SPELL, THE CURSE, THE MEANS TO DESTROY HIM... TO SEND HIM BACK TO THE PIT FROM WHICH HE CAME!

DEAR LORD! HE'S INSANE... COMPLETELY INSANE!



SHE
FLED THE
LIBRARY,
RACING UP
FLIGHTS OF
THE DARK
CREAKING
STAIRS...

DONALD!
WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
UP?

NOISE
WOKE ME... I
HEARD VOICES...
SHOUTING!



DONALD,
DEAR, LISTEN TO ME...
IT ISN'T SAFE HERE ANY
LONGER! YOUR FATHER'S
NOT WELL... I'VE
GOT TO GET
YOU AWAY...

YES...
I THINK I'M
READY TO
LEAVE NOW!

NO!
DEAR
GOD NO!
THIS
TIME
IT'S NOT
NERVES...

DONALD... LET'S
GO BACK TO
YOUR ROOM...

THE MOON-LIGHT OUTSIDE THE OPEN LANDING WINDOW
SOMEHOW PULLED RACHEL'S EYES. A DEATHLY QUIET HUNG OVER THE MANSION AND DARKENED GARDEN... THEN RACHEL HEARD THE SOUND...



THIS WAS NO SLEEP-FOGGED DELUSION.
NOW SHE COULD HEAR THE DOOR,
FROM THE GARDEN, THEN AGAIN THE
SHUFFLING... SLITHERING... NOW
INSIDE!

D-DONALD, I
DON'T THINK WE
SHOULD BE OUT
HERE... LET'S...

COME
ON,
MISS
MEREDITH.
THIS WAY...

FROM THE YAWNING BLACK DEPTHS
OF THE STAIRWAY, MORE SOUNDS
DRIFTED UP... WOOD SPLINTERING
AND CRACKING AS THE LIBRARY
DOOR GAVE WAY!

DONALD! DON'T
GO DOWN THERE! GET
BACK! DONALD...

COME ON, WE WANT
TO SEE WHAT'S GOING
ON... COME ON,
MISS MEREDITH!

THE GLOW
OF THE
KEROSENE
LAMP CREST
SURELY DOWN
THE WINDING
FLIGHTS AND
DISAPPEARED IN
THE VICINITY OF
THE LIBRARY. SECONDS
LATER, THE DARKNESS
WAS SPLIT BY SHRIEK-
ING HORROR!

DONALD!
OH, MY
GOD...
DONALD!

HALF-RUNNING,
HALF-FALLING, RACHEL
DESCENDED THE STAIRS ONLY
TO FREEZE IN MADDENING TERROR AT
THE MACABRE TABLEAU BEFORE HER,
AS SOUNDS AND ODORS OF UNEARTHLY
CARNAGE STUNNED HER REMAINING SENSES.

EEEEE EEEEEE



THEN, AS THOUGH ONLY A NIGHTMARE INSTEAD OF THIS PHANTASMAGORIC REALITY, SHE RACED FORWARD FOR THE BOY, HOPING STILL TO SAVE HIM...

DONALD! LISTEN TO ME! COME BACK!
COME BA---

THE LAMP!
YOU'VE DROPPED
THE LAMP!

HE SHRUGGED FREE SENDING RACHEL REELING BACKWARD AS THE LAMP HIT THE CARPETING AND SCATTERED BOOKS... ABOVE THE CRACKLING FLAMES AND HAZETINE'S SCREAMS, SHE COULD HEAR THE GROWING GIGGLE OF THE BOY...



THE LIBRARY BECAME AN INFERO WHICH WOULD SOON SPREAD TO THE ENTIRE HOUSE, AND THE DANCING SHADOWS OF ITS FLAMES ALL BUT DROVE RACHEL MAD. AS SHE SANK INTO OBLIVION, DONALD'S LAUGHTER GREW TO A WORD SHOUTED OVER AND OVER... THE NAME OF THE LOATHSOME THING CLAWING AND DESTROYING HAZETINE...



MEN FROM THE VILLAGE FOUND HER THE NEXT MORNING, SPRAWLED ON THE LAWN OF WHAT ONCE HAD BEEN HAZETINE HOUSE... INSIDE, THEY FOUND THE CHARRED REMAINS OF EMMETT HAZETINE, NOTHING MORE.

SHE'S GONNA BE OKAY... LITTLE DELIRIOUS NOW, BUT SHE'LL BE OKAY...

...THAT'S WHAT HE CALLED IT... THAT THING... HE CALLED IT... MOTHER!

SO! DONALD HAD A PRETTY HOT TIME AT HIS FAMILY REUNION... LIKE ALL MOTHERS, HIS TENDED TO BE OVERPROTECTIVE... AS MR. HAZETINE FOUND OUT! AND YOU'LL FIND OUT THERE'S MORE MONSTROUS MAYHEM AWAITING YOU WHEN YOU PICK UP ISSUE NUMBER 7 OF EERIE!



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